# Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches

**10 - 11 September 1996**

**Meeting held at the Ecumenical Centre, Geneva, Switzerland**

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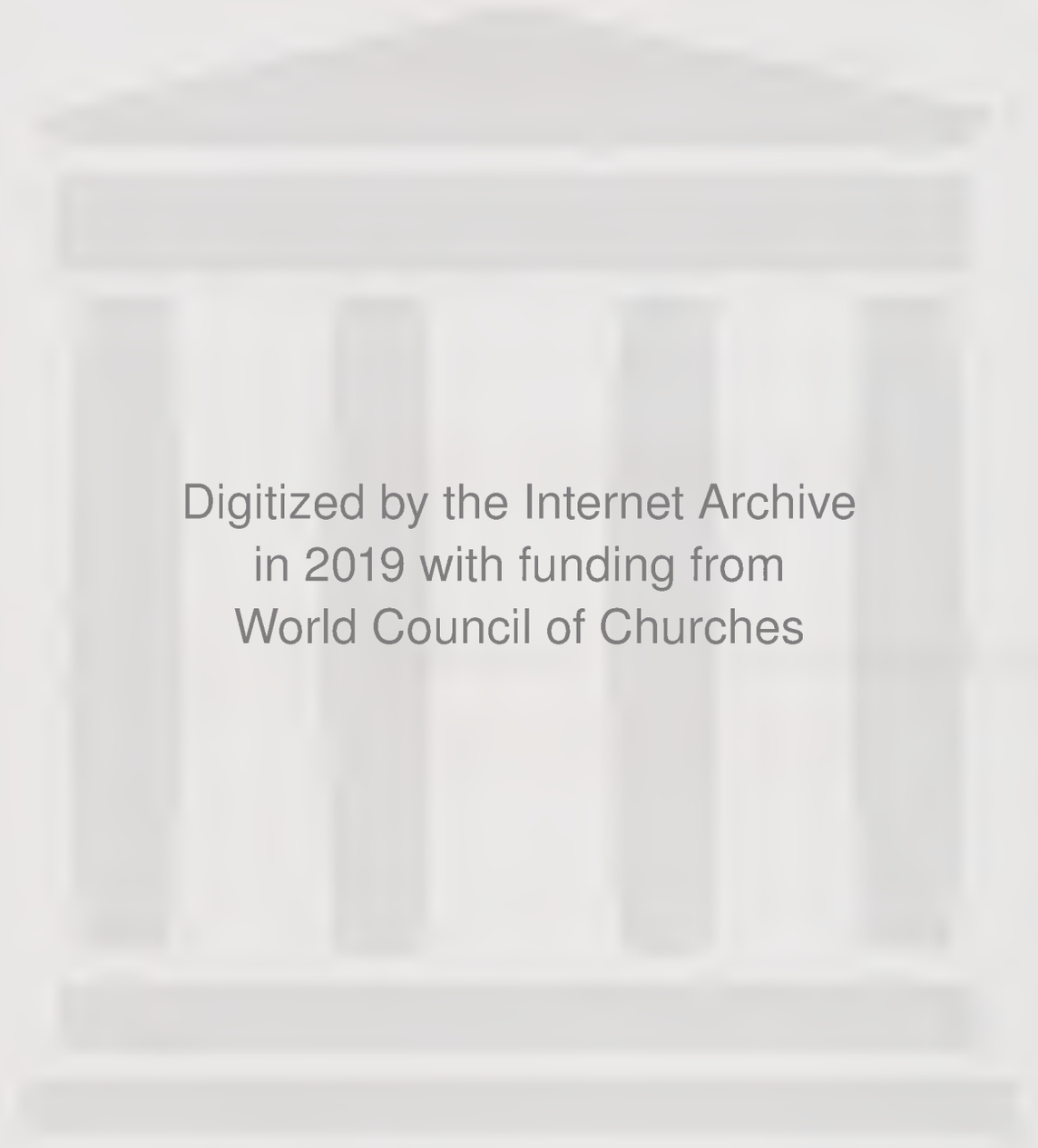
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World Council of Churches

# EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

at the
Ecumenical Centre, Geneva, Switzerland

**10-11 September 1996**

## 1. OPENING ACTIONS

### A. Worship

The Opening Worship was led by members of the Executive Committee, and the sermon was preached by Bishop Leslie Boseto. During the service, the General Secretary presented Bishop Boseto, on behalf of the Solomon Islands Christian Association, with a chalice and platen as a sign of appreciation for the understanding they had demonstrated in face of the Executive Committee's failure to respond to their call to come and hold its meeting in the Solomon Islands in March 1996.

### B. Call to Order

The Moderator, His Holiness Aram I, called the meeting to order at 9.00 hrs on Tuesday 10 September 1996. He welcomed members to this first meeting for a year, due to the cancellation of the one scheduled to take place in the Solomon Islands in March 1996. Members had received a letter explaining that, due to the number of apologies received shortly before the meeting and the resulting effect this would have on the Committee's ability to do its work satisfactorily, the Officers had felt obliged to cancel the meeting. The Moderator assured the Council's member churches in the Pacific region that the Executive Committee was supporting them - all were part of the one people of God, part of the one ecumenical fellowship.

### C. Roll Call

The General Secretary called the roll of those present, noting apologies for absence from Metr. Daniel of Moldavia and Bukovina, Metr. Kirill of Smolensk, and Rev. Valamotu Palu. Archimandrite Nestor Jiliaev and Ms Tungane Williams were welcomed as substitutes.

### D. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held in Geneva on 12-13 September 1995 were approved as circulated.

### E. Agenda and Timetable

The General Secretary presented the draft agenda and proposed timetable, which were adopted.

## 2. REPORT OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY

The General Secretary began by referring to the events leading to the regrettable cancellation of the Executive Committee meeting in the Solomon Islands in March. In order to deal with urgent business, a special meeting of the Finance Sub-committee was called at the end of March, about which the Executive Committee was informed.

An extended Officers' meeting in May provided opportunity for discussion with the Unit Directors and a review of the process of priority setting in the area of programmes. A letter to the Executive Committee in June summarised the main actions taken, and this should be seen as a part of the minutes of the Executive Committee.

Dr Raiser expressed particular thanks to those who had ensured the continuation of the Council's work during the difficult period since the last meeting.

The General Secretary then mentioned his *visits to member churches* during the past year - to India, UK, South Africa, Syria, Egypt, Poland, Armenia (Etchmiadzin), and Ecuador. Together with several staff members he had paid an extensive visit to the Pacific (including Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu) and Aoteoroa New Zealand, which helped to alleviate some of the disappointment experienced by these churches and to deepen relationships between the Pacific region and the Council.

In the course of these visits, further meetings in the series between the *WCC and REOs* took place - with the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC), the Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC), and the Latin American Council of Churches (CLAI); the encounter with CCA was planned for 1997.

Finally, he had attended part of the ETE Conference in Oslo in August on the *Viability of Ecumenical Theological Education*; the same month he had addressed the *Faith and Order Plenary Commission* at its session in Moshi, Tanzania. While in Africa he had visited President Mugabe in Harare, Zimbabwe.

*Visitors* received at the Ecumenical Centre included the Ecumenical Patriarch (December 1995), Patriarch Ilia of Georgia (May 1996), and Catholicos Karekin of the Armenian Apostolic Church - Etchmiadzin (June 1996).

A number of international *ecumenical assemblies* were scheduled during the course of 1997: WARC, CEC, LWF, AACC, PCC and CCC. Some visible presence of the WCC was expected in each case and consideration was being given to the most useful way for the Council to participate.

With regard to continuing *programmatic work*: a good deal of time had been spent on *Assembly preparations*; the report of the AWC and APC meetings in June/July would come to the Central Committee for discussion and adoption. A visit to Harare had given opportunity for Wesley Ariarajah to discuss the Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of Zimbabwe; this had been signed by a representative of the Government, by Rev. M. Kuchera on behalf of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches, and by Dr Ariarajah for the WCC.

The continuing process around the *Common Understanding and Vision of the WCC* was progressing; a first draft document would be shared with Central Committee for discussion and revision prior to its being sent to the churches. The Programme Sub-committee would be requested to consider how the CUV process should be taken beyond this Central Committee meeting and up to the Assembly.

The *financial situation* had been the main preoccupation of staff since September 1995. Efforts to reduce the deficit on the 1996 budget had included the necessity to reduce staff in order to cut salary costs. The limit had been reached of what could be done at management level: any further reduction would touch areas of mandated activity implying a change of established policy. Any such steps should thus be seen in the context of an emerging understanding of the WCC, its purposes and functions, for the period after the Assembly. The Officers believed that the Executive Committee should be the body to carry the main responsibility for seeing this process through in all its implications.

Basic questions regarding *internal management* had arisen in the context of work on financial matters. If the total income were to remain at its current reduced level -

and it was feared that it may decrease still further - this would have consequences for the WCC's administrative structure. The General Secretariat and the Officers were looking at ways of reducing senior staff leadership and re-ordering responsibilities in the area of finance and management. These matters would be referred to the appropriate Sub-committees for consideration and recommendation.

In discussion, the Moderator expressed appreciation for the General Secretary's visits to member churches - a vital dimension of the Council's work. He underlined the need to learn more about the expectations and frustations of the member churches vis à vis the Council, and about the ecumenical situations and realities in the lives of the churches. He proposed that the General Secretary make an overall assessment of his visitation programme in terms of identifying the basic needs and aspirations of the churches, perhaps in his next report to the Central Committee. Dr Raiser responded that he was in process of preparing a manuscript which included such an evaluation, linking it to the CUV process.

In response to a question by Bishop Zacharias, Dr Raiser assured him that visits and encounters with representatives of non-member churches had become a natural part of his visits to churches. In many cases, the national or local ecumenical structures were more inclusive than WCC membership; the Roman Catholic Church is often fully integrated on those levels and is perhaps the main non-member church with whom he is in contact during most of his visits. He also met with representatives of Pentecostal and Evangelical churches and other smaller churches which would not qualify for WCC membership. Where appropriate, contacts with representatives of other religious communities were included in his programme, as in India.

Questions were asked concerning the effect of the financial situation on programmes, to which Dr Raiser responded that a 20% cut in staff inevitably effects the work. Less could be achieved, and this meant setting priorities.

Prof. Aagaard was concerned that present estimates of future management and structure needs were too optimistic; she would prefer to have opportunity for fuller discussion, perhaps at the Executive meeting in February. Dr Raiser pointed out that there was no assumption that structures would remain the same in future; it was clear that the whole system needed reconsideration. However, the time span was so brief that he felt this discussion could not be postponed, thus the General Secretariat was leading the way with some proposals for change.

Dr Nababan asked whether the General Secretary discussed financial matters when he visited churches. Dr Raiser said that he did, and that there was a certain

sympathy and willingness to continue support on the part of churches in the North. But they have financial problems as well, and they need solidarity from the World Council. Some churches however see the WCC as a channel for support of their own activities and do not consider it necessary to explain why they do not contribute to the WCC.

Less than 50% of member churches make an annual contribution, and ten member churches contribute more than 80% of the Council's total income. This meant that 320 churches share among themselves the remaining 15-20% of income, and more than 50% make no contribution at all. This suggested something about the attitude among member churches vis à vis the WCC and it was this attitude that had to be addressed primarily. This was what was involved in the CUV discussion.

Bishop Anderson asked whether there was any mechanism that could be used in responding to publications that were critical of the World Council. Dr Raiser explained that no such mechanism had been developed up to now; any response was seen as the responsibility of those bearing some co-responsibility for the Council in a given country, rather than leaving it to staff in Geneva.

## 3. MODERATOR'S REPORT TO CENTRAL COMMITTEE

The Moderator gave a brief outline of his report to the Central Committee. As was customary, the first section was a detailed report of the work of the Executive Committee and the Officers since September 1995; this was of particular importance in view of the fact that the March meeting of the Executive Committee had not taken place and no minutes were therefore available to provide this information. The second part dealt with issues in relation to the whole question of ethnicity.

A number of comments and suggestions were made by members of the Executive Committee.

## 4. PROGRAMMATIC WORK AND REPORT OF PROGRAMME SUB-COMMITTEE

### A. The WCC and Celebrations to Mark the Year 2000

Mr George Lemopoulos introduced a paper describing the present situation (see Appendix III), which was referred to the Programme Sub-committee.

At a later session, Ms Ritchie reported on behalf of the Sub-committee:

> The Programme Sub-committee continued the conversation on the role of the WCC in supporting the desire of the churches to mark the birth of the new millennium. It reaffirmed the conviction that the WCC should play a facilitating role and not seek to be the convenor of a global event. The sensitivities of facilitating an event in Jerusalem were acknowledged.
>
> The Sub-committee *recommended that the document The WCC and Celebrations to Mark the Year 2000 be forwarded to the General Secretariat Committee of Central Committee with the request that, on the basis of this report, it prepare a document on the WCC's understanding of the celebration of the Year 2000 and the role it seeks to play in facilitating the celebration of the year by the churches.*

The Executive Committee **agreed** to this recommendation.

The General Secretary reminded the Executive Committee that he had sent a memorandum on this subject to the member churches following the meeting in Bucharest (September 1994) but had received no response, probably because it was too early. The churches were now anxious to know what was expected of them, and it would be helpful to have the authority of Central Committee in communicating with them further on the subject.

**B. Eighth Assembly**

The report of the Assembly Planning Committee (APC) was presented by Rev. Wesley Ariarajah. He pointed out that APC reports directly to Central Committee, while the Executive deals with nominations and budget matters. The APC was asking for Central Committee's attention to several important questions:

Regarding the *venue*: questions continued to be raised as to whether it was feasible to contemplate such a gathering in Harare in a time of financial crisis, or whether it would not be wiser to hold a smaller meeting for delegates only. Others were concerned about the Zimbabwe Government's attitude to homosexuality, and felt the Council should not go to Harare as a sign of protest.

A comparative study of the costs for Harare over against Geneva showed that the saving for a Geneva-based meeting was not very great due to the high cost of accommodation in Geneva. Moreover, the assembly budget is separate from general funds, and income was being received as anticipated. However, the general fund

contribution to the assembly would not be made in 1996-1998 and the APC had agreed to adjust the total assembly budget from CHF 12 million to 11 million.

If the assembly were held in Geneva it would be simply a business meeting. But were the Council to cancel its plan to go to Harare, the disappointment for the African churches would be tremendous, given the expectations and hopes they are attaching to the assembly.

Other issues that Central Committee would be asked to consider in relation to the assembly included the discussion around whether or not to have a eucharistic celebration, and what kind of celebrations should be envisaged for the 50th anniversary.

The APC report was referred to the Programme Sub-committee.

At a later session, Ms Ritchie presented the report of the Sub-committee:

> The Programme Sub-committee noted the concerns raised by those who were suggesting a change of venue for the Eighth Assembly as part of the means to address the financial difficulties of the Council. It also took account of the objections raised by some persons and groups on the Harare venue on the grounds of the attitudes expressed on homosexuality by senior government authorities.

A question was asked as to why the subject of venue was being raised again. Dr Ariarajah explained that the APC had not seen any reason for questioning the venue but had not taken any formal action. The General Secretary added that a member of the Executive had raised the matter in writing on financial grounds, and for this reason a financial comparison between Harare and Geneva had been prepared. There was no reason why the matter should be brought to Central Committee unless it was raised specifically.

## C. Towards a Common Understanding Vision of the WCC (CUV)

The General Secretary explained that a draft document would be presented to Central Committee in plenary, and a special Hearing was planned on the Sunday evening in order to allow more opportunity for contributions by Central Committee members to the discussion of the issues raised by the CUV document. This text was referred to the Programme Sub-committee.

At a later session, Ms Ritchie presented the report of the Sub-committee:

> The Programme Sub-committee commended the discussion paper on the Common Understanding and Vision process, believing that it would form a good basis for discussion in Central Committee.
>
> It recommended that clear information be given to the Central Committee with regard to the rest of the process up to the assembly, including mention of necessary time constraints in case any constitutional changes were required. It also recommended that the dates of the October CUV consultation and the names of those invited to work on the two chapters yet to be completed, be shared, so that anyone who had suggestions or amendments to the draft might communicate them to the persons concerned.
>
> The Sub-committee emphasised the importance of correlating all decisions on structures, programmes and staffing to the CUV process.
>
> The Sub-committee also encouraged those working on the CUV and programme review process not to be over-influenced by the present financial crisis but to take a long-term view of the basic mandates of the Council. The Sub-Committee was convinced that a dramatic reduction of the programmatic life of the Council would contribute to further erosion of funds and to a loss of confidence in the Council as an effective instrument of the ecumenical movement.
>
> The Sub-committee noted its deep concern about staff morale and the possibility of losing staff who would be of value in the period up to and beyond the assembly.
>
> *The Executive Committee agreed to forward the CUV document in its present form to the Central Committee, and to draw the attention of the General Secretary and those working on the CUV process to the concerns expressed by the Programme Sub-committee.*

Responding to a question for further clarification, the General Secretary explained that in the CUV document it had been felt necessary to separate the basic questions of understanding which are theological and ecclesiological from issues relating to the organisational consequences to be drawn from a clarification of our understanding. The present document focused on this understanding, and was basically an explication of Articles I and III of the Constitution. A Hearing during the forthcoming Central Committee would give opportunity for members to make their suggestions

and observations on what they consider to be the possibilities and limitations of organisational and structural implications.

This input would be made available to those invited to a small consultation in mid-October (Fr H. Alfayev, Rev. I. Allsop, Fr N. Apostola, Rev. T. Arai, Mr B. Kiplagat, Dr B. Larsson, Prof. L. Mudge, and Ms B. Rantakari), who were being asked to draft the two missing chapters of the CUV document dealing with structural and organisational matters. The CUV document as revised on the basis of input from Central Committee and from this consultation would be sent in mid-November to member churches for their reactions. It would then come back to the Executive Committee in February 1997.

The General Secretary further explained that it was the hope of the Officers that the Executive Committee be acknowledged as the body responsible for taking the CUV process up to the assembly. It would probably be necessary to name a small sub-group to do this additional work, and he proposed the following: Prof. Aagaard, Ms Best, Dr Kässmann, Fr Kishkovsky, Ms Mapanao, Ms Rantakari, Bishop Talbert, Dr Tolen, Bishop Zacharias. (Ms Santana was also asked by Central Committee to serve on this group). A second group would be working on financial management, and the two should complement one another (see Report of Finance Sub-committee, item K, p.21-22).

## D. The Meaning of Membership

This paper had already been considered by the Executive and Central Committees in 1995; it was then circulated to member churches inviting them to send in their comments. The fact that only three churches had responded raised the question as to whether WCC membership in fact has any significance for the churches. On the other hand, they may have found the paper acceptable and so had no comments to make.

The paper had been slightly revised in light of the responses received, and care had been taken to ensure that it converged with the CUV document as requested by Central Committee. The Executive was asked to prepare a recommendation on what the next steps in the process should be.

The Moderator stressed the importance of this text which, once finalised, should serve as a major point of reference in the life of the Council.

The paper was referred to the Programme Sub-committee.

At a later session, Ms Ritchie presented the Sub-committee's report:

The Sub-committee expressed appreciation for the work done on the meaning of membership. A number of amendments and revisions to the wording were suggested for incorporation into the text prior to its being presented to Central Committee.

The Programme Sub-committee requested that the document on the Meaning of Membership be referred to the General Secretariat Committee of Central Committee for its consideration with a view to recommending that:

- the Central Committee receive the document;
- it be shared with the member churches;
- it be used in the preparation of new member churches; and
- its contents be incorporated appropriately into the document on Common Understanding and Vision of the WCC.

*The Executive Committee accepted the proposed revisions to the paper on The Meaning of Membership (see CC minutes, September 1996, Appendix V) and the action recommended by the Programme Sub-committee.*

## E. Conference on World Mission and Evangelism

A report on final preparations for the Conference was introduced by Rev. Ana Langerak, who noted that the Mission Conference is described as a "specialised activity of the WCC" which has its own consitutional function. The business side of the meeting would have to deal with a number of issues, since the CWME used to be a Commission in its own right while now it was a part of Unit II.

The Moderator hoped that the Conference would not be simply an isolated event but that its findings would be channelled towards the CUV process and the assembly. Secondly, he hoped the development of separate statements by the Evangelicals and the Orthodox, as had happened previously, would be discouraged.

Dr Tsetsis pointed out that some believed the WCC to be too much involved in dialogue with people of other living faiths rather than preaching the gospel to all nations. Mission and evangelism must remain high on the Council's agenda.

Ms Langerak was anxious that the Conference not be seen as an isolated event. The previous one (San Antonio, USA, 1989) had not been followed up sufficiently due to the large number of other meetings taking place around the same time. Every

effort would be made to ensure that this Conference would have an impact not only on Unit II but on the World Council as a whole. A report would be presented to Central Committee in 1997, and she hoped that some space would be found at the Assembly to discuss the various outcomes of the Conference, perhaps in the framework of the Hearings.

A new Statement on Mission and Evangelism was in draft form, and Conference participants would be invited to provide additional content. The completed text to was to be shared with Central Committee in 1997.

The report was referred to the Programme Sub-committee.

At a later session, Ms Ritchie presented the Sub-committee's report:

Ms Langerak, Executive Director of Unit II, gave further details of the World Mission Conference and of the concerns that were likely to be raised within the Business Session of the Conference.

The Sub-committee welcomed the opportunity afforded to the Executive Committee to familiarize itself with different aspects of the Mission Conference.

In relation to the Business Session at the Conference, the Sub-committee noted that:

- Since the World Mission Conference would bring together a mission constituency larger than that of the member churches of the WCC, it is important to listen carefully to the comments and concerns raised by this constituency on the missionary situation today, its perceptions and observations on how the WCC is dealing with mission issues in its programmes, and the way it organizes its programme structures.

- It would be important to affirm in this Business Session that, as the WCC looks to the future, Mission and Evangelism will continue to be a primary part of its mandate and agenda.

- The Mission Conference should be used as an opportunity to enter into creative partnerships on mission concerns with mission agencies and churches.

*The Executive Committee **received** the information on the Conference on World Mission and Evangelism with appreciation and **commended** the observations made by the Programme Sub-committee to the staff concerned.*

## 5. PUBLIC ISSUES

Rev. Dwain Epps presented a Note on Public Issues, which included a list of actions taken since the Central Committee meeting in September 1995.

The section entitled *The Contemporary Role of the Church in International Affairs* raised a number of questions relating to the complexity of issues confronting the churches since Canberra. Central Committee had devoted unprecedented attention to public issues during this period, and in the process questions had been raised which demand new forms of approach and analysis. The post-Cold-War period had been marked by a proliferation of ethnic and nationality conflicts in which religion had become a major element. It was imperative for the churches to reflect anew on their role in international afairs at this point in history. The paper raised some of the questions needing attention. This reflection was all the more urgent, since churches in many parts of the world had become more introspective and many were giving less serious attention to global political concerns. The question must be put: What did this imply for the fellowship of the Council as it moves towards the Assembly?

A Consultation on Church, Community, State in the Contemporary World had been held in conjunction with the meeting of the Board of International Affairs in Seoul, Korea, in July 1996; it had prepared a message which the Executive might wish to commend to Central Committee and thence to the churches for study.

The paper was referred to the Programme Sub-committee, and the proposed membership of the Public Issues Committee was referred to the Staffing and Nominations Sub-committee.

At a later session, Ms Ritchie presented the report of the Sub-committee:

> The Programme Sub-committee welcomed the **Notes on Public Issues** and expressed its appreciation for the work done.
>
> It made the following recommendations:
> *1.1 that, with some amendments, the text "A Note on the Contemporary Role of the Church in International Affairs" be shared with the Central Committee as a discussion paper;*
>
> *1.2 that the Public Issues Committee be requested to recommend, on the basis of discussions in Central Committee, an appropriate action on the statement for adoption by the Central Committee;*

*2. that staff be requested to revise the list of Statements and Messages by the General Secretary since September 1995 to incorporate information on the action taken by the WCC on the US missile attacks on northern Iraq;*

*3. that the Message of the Consultation on Church, Community, State in the Contemporary World be shared with Unit III Committee as background material;*

*4. that, in view of the forthcoming assembly, the CCIA be requested to bring to the 1997 meeting of Central Committee an updated document on the principles and procedures that govern the WCC's actions on public issues.*

The Executive Committee **agreed** to these recommendations.

## 6. FINANCIAL SITUATION

The General Secretary began by referring to his report to Central Committee, which would concentrate on the Council's financial problems and explain the nature of the current crisis in some detail. He stressed that to the best of his knowledge the crisis was not due to any mismanagement or mishandling of funds. Mistakes had indeed been made, but these in the main had been the result of misleading advice received from financial advisers.

The major crisis faced by the Council was affecting most other international organisations as well as many national churches and church-related bodies. The amount of funds that used to be available for the purposes to which churches and ecumenical bodies are committed were no longer obtainable, while more and more money was being used for profit and speculative business.

Danger signals might have been discernible earlier if the careful analysis of income development now available had been prepared in previous years. This showed that, while income had remained relatively stable or had slightly decreased for several years, since 1993 there had been a downward trend because access to resources on the part of the WCC's main funding partners had become increasingly limited. The total turnover in 1993 amounted to some CHF 120 million, while in 1995 it was down to CHF 60 million, and there was no assurance that this downward trend had reached its lowest point.

Immediate measures were taken to deal with the budget situation for 1996 and 1997; the long-term implications had yet to be considered. Staff had hoped to be able to

bring a balanced budget for 1997 for approval, but after making all possible reductions, they had reached a point where any further cut would mean changes in policy. The governing bodies were thus being aked for advice as to how to proceed.

A number of underlying problems had emerged that had to be addressed urgently:

a) Unless ways could be found to stabilise the *income situation*, any attempt to balance budgets would fail. The responsibility of the member churches for the Council must be underlined strongly; it was clear that those which have not supported the Council over the years were unlikely to do so in the short-term. The Income Development Strategy paper, "Providing the Resources", adopted by Central Committee in August 1992 (CC minutes, pp.171-179), and which had served as the basis of strategies followed since then, must be reaffirmed.

b) Attention must be given to the Council's *expenditure* structure. The proportion of staff salary costs had become non-sustainably high (73% in 1996), though staff cuts would reduce this to below 65% in 1997. A monitoring mechanism was necessary to ensure that budgets do not again become out of balance.

c) The internal budget structure must be revised, and the whole question of *shared costs* (services belonging to the normal expenditure of the Units) must be re-worked on the basis of policy guidelines on the balance between what can be seen as a sustainable amount of shared costs over against the income available to the Units.

d) In the past, additional income was generated by investing *fund balances*, but, having been reduced to a minimum level, they no longer generated any income. This meant that the basis of the Council's investment income had been reduced and no significant income could be expected. Any income must be used to rebuild balances.

Mr John Irwin, chief accountant, presented the *Financial Report for 1995*, drawing attention in particular to the reduction in activity funds; the deficit on undesignated income, and the deficit on General Funds.

Mr Davies referred to the enlarged meeting of the Finance Sub-committee held in March and the decision that a reduction of 10% be made in all expenditure for 1996. He explained that, in the past, a number of items including exchange and forward transactions had been listed under the heading of investments. These had now been separated to reflect the investment results more clearly. The Finance Committee at Canberra had asked for a more dynamic investment policy, and the results had been generally good in spite of a bad period when losses were suffered everywhere. Two

evaluations of the Council's investment policy had concluded that these policies and performances were satisfactory and, with adjustments, should be continued.

## 7. REPORT OF THE FINANCE SUB-COMMITTEE

Ms Birgitta Rantakari presented the report; the first part was for information, while the second part included several recommendations for action.

### A. Financial update

The General Secretary had given an update on events since March 1996: efforts had been made to reduce expenditure in the UDI and shared cost dependent sectors, but this had not proved sufficient to produce a balanced budget; by July a shortfall of about CHF 1 million remained, which would be hard to absorb by management decision alone. Expenditure control since Canberra had been good, but the process had identified weaknesses in the budget procedures and it was clear that WCC operations had become too extended for the income available. New sources were unlikely to be the answer; rather, the Council would have to be re-shaped in line with resources available (as was the case for many churches and organisations). Serious thinking was taking place and a new Financial Plan and Management Structure had been drafted.

Since the last meeting of Central Committee, the 1996 budget deficit had been reduced, the 1995 Financial Report produced and a revised 1997 budget worked on. The preliminary budget for 1998 indicated, however, that more work was necessary on budgets for both 1997 and 1998.

The main problems were:

a) The internal budget process: insufficient UDI meant that basic costs of General Secretariat and infrastructure services had to be re-distributed, which was a great strain as general and activities income reduced;

b) Staff costs had risen to some 73% of general expenditure;

c) Fund balances were greatly reduced. Two investment evaluations in two years had shown that there was no mismanagement of investment portfolios, but funds had been used to cover shortfalls to the point where further reduction would jeopardise emergency reserves and designated funds. The Council had come to rely on investment income, but since this was no longer available, it was necessary to rethink how income was calculated.

## B. Income Projections

Mr Rath reported that clear information was now available thanks to the Scala system. Total income had fallen by 33% in the 5 years to 1995 and was predicted to drop by 50% by 1998. Undesignated income had stagnated, rising only 7% in 8 years, insufficient to cover inflation. It raised about CHF 6.2 million, whereas a minimum of CHF 10 million was required. 52% of member churches make no contribution. Activities income had dropped between 1991 and 1997 by 45%, but this included funds now going to the independently accounted ACT (CHF 10-15 million).

The Sub-committee felt that the role of governing bodies in decision-making and support for staff needed reviewing, as did the sense of co-responsibility and commitment by member churches. A new attitude to the WCC and the ecumenical movement was taking shape, and it was hoped that the CUV process might clarify the situation and the WCC's future role.

## C. Programme reports

A report was given by Ms Lundy on efforts at prioritisation and the way they were feeding into the CUV process. Unit Directors spoke about the prioritising process in their Units and how they were tackling the financial situation.
**Unit IV** had been using old fund balances to establish new styles of work, particularly in information management services for agencies, for which a charge may have to be made in future. **Unit II** had taken measures to contain expenditure and prioritise - the main thrust was the CWME Conference in 1996. **Unit I** had reduced staff and left key vacancies for Worship and Spirituality and the Differently Abled unfilled because of shortage of funds. Yet, theological reflection was vital in relationships and the CUV process. **Unit III** had seen the financial situation as an opportunity to depart from separate staff teams and become one Unit team to cover all concerns flexibly; this meant a number of redundancies. Publications had been centralised, whereas some work had been based outside Geneva. In **Relationships and Communications** there had been some drastic cuts, specially in the language service, and it was clear these concerns would be central in the CUV process.

## D. Revised budget 1997

Mr Davies indicated the areas where savings were still required in order to balance the 1997 budget. The UDI available was still insufficient to cover the needs of Relationships and Communications, Unit I and Bossey, and there were no clear guidelines about how allocations should be made. The amortisation of the staff restructuring programme (currently CHF 1.6 million) was being spread

over five years and it was hoped that special contributions requested would reduce this: pledges of CHF 416,000 had been received, bringing the annual cost to CHF 235,000. In order to maintain shared costs at the 1996 level, further savings in the General Secretariat and Office of Management and Finance of nearly CHF 500,000 were required. Some savings were being sought through changes in management structures and new forms of providing certain services, but these would take time to negotiate and implement.

The General Secretary had stated that no major re-structuring should be undertaken at the present time. Some changes in the shared costs system had been made since no UDI was available to support these services. Redundancies, partial redundancies and internal transfers touching 80 staff had effected a major saving (46 full time equivalent staff posts), but more savings were necessary.

Any shortfall in 1996 would further deplete General funds. The need for governing body involvement and support in such crucial management decision-making processes was noted.

## E. Financial Report and Accounts 1995

Having studied and taken note of this Report, the Sub-committee recommended, and the Executive Committee **agreed**:

*that the Financial Report and Accounts for 1995 be forwarded to the Central Committee for approval.*

## F. Revised budget 1997

In response to a question as to how a balanced budget could be achieved, the General Secretary said this implied further work by staff drawing on the wisdom of members of the Finance Sub-committee and the Executive; a revised proposal would be brought to the FSC in February so that, through the FSC, the Executive could approve a balanced budget.

The question of whether further cuts would be necessary to achieve this balanced budget would depend on whether additional income could be found. Some specific efforts were under way, specifically regarding Bossey in the hope that the Jubilee Fund would raise sufficient funds to make it self-supporting and not reliant on a major contribution from UDI.

Staff had been considering various options with a view to reducing budgets: the continued existence of four units each with a commission was being questioned; was

it possible to reduce infrastructure costs in order to allow for the continuation of programmes? Proposed changes in management structures were under consideration (see item J. below), and some suggestions for re-organising the General Secretariat would be shared also with the Finance Committee and the General Secretariat Committee of Central Committee.

On recommendation of the Finance Sub-committee, the Executive Committee:

> ***reaffirmed*** *that the 1997 budget must be balanced. It* ***noted*** *the revised budget for 1997 as submitted and forwarded it to Central Committee for information; it* ***instructed*** *the Finance Sub-Committee to continue its work in order to present a balanced budget to the Executive Committee in February 1997 for approval (using the exchange rate of CHF 1.20 to the US dollar).*

**G. Preliminary budget 1998**

The Sub-committee recommended and the Executive Committee **agreed**

> *that the preliminary budget for 1998 be noted by the Central Committee and that the Finance Committee and staff be requested to bring a revised, balanced budget for approval by Central Committee in September 1997.*

**H. Income Development matters**

The Sub-committee heard a report on income development concerns from Mr Rath, director of OICD. Mention was made of the General Secretary's Donor Consultation in May when several key funding partners were challenged to assist the Council in two capital appeals, one to fund the Staff Restructuring costs (an appeal for CHF 2 million) and the other to meet the cost of essential renovations to the Ecumenical Centre. A total of CHF 420,000 had been pledged for the former (reducing the amortisation charge in the budget) and it was hoped that the Swiss Federal and Cantonal authorities would make a grant towards the latter.

A report on the Ecumenical Development Initiative (EDI) would be presented to the Central Committee Finance Committee by Dr Pennybacker. Mr Rath also reported on Assembly income and pledges (nearly CHF 1 million received and CHF 6 million pledged towards a target of CHF 8 million, comparing favourably with CHF 5.1 million received and pledged 18 months prior to the Canberra Assembly). In light of these reports

it was recommended, and the Executive Committee **agreed:**

*to note the concern of OICD with regard to reporting standards and the need to improve the quality of progress reports; to ask the Unit Executive Directors to review, with Unit staff, the quality of reports and to coordinate with OICD in order to safeguard income;*

*to note the suggestions that local congregations might be asked to make a special offering or contribution to mark the Council's 50th Anniversary; to encourage OICD to consult with OCER, the Office of Communications and the Assembly Planning Committee about how the 50th Anniversary might be used for fundraising;*

*to note the report of the Finance Sub-Committee on payments and pledges for the Eighth Assembly and urge all member churches which have not yet made any commitment at all to do so as soon as possible.*

The Moderator asked whether there were any developments in relation to fund-raising efforts being pursued in North East Asia. Mr Rath said that in visiting the area staff had had to concentrate first on building relationships, convincing the churches of the need for them to play a more active role in the life of the Council, and this took time. Another staff visit was planned shortly.

**I. Eighth Assembly - Fifth Draft Budget**

The Sub-committee noted the revised draft budget (see CC minutes, September 1996, Appendix VII), showing the reduction of budgeted expenditure to CHF 11 million due to the suspension of annual contributions from the Council's general funds to the Assembly. It also noted the "alternative Geneva budget", drawn up to demonstrate that the cost of transferring the Assembly to Geneva in an emergency would be unlikely to cost more than Harare.

In view of some unclarity about the funding of the Women's Festival to mark the end of the Decade of the Churches in Solidarity with Women, Dr Raiser pointed out that this was a separate event and funding for it was entirely separate from the assembly budget. The Pre-Assembly Women's Meeting (PAWM), following the Festival, was however an assembly-related event and funding for that was included in the assembly budget.

Ms Gnanadason said that a fund-raising campaign for the Festival had been launched and it was hoped that the event would be funded by women. The Women's Desk was working in cooperation with women's organisations, and a regional Festival appeal was planned. Dr Kässmann recalled Unit III's original intention, approved

by Central Committee in 1995, to hold the Festival a few weeks prior to the Assembly, but it was recognised that it was unreasonable to organise two meetings so close together and the Unit III Commission decided that the Festival should take place immediately prior to the Assembly.

On recommendation of the Sub-committee the Executive Committee **agreed**

> *to approve the fifth draft of the Assembly budget, with expenditure limited to CHF 11 million, and that a summary be submitted to the Central Committee for its approval.*

**J. Future WCC Management Structures**

It had become clear that for both management and financial reasons the Council could no longer sustain the current level of senior management staff. As a result of a consultation process in the General Secretariat and the SEG, with the Officers and with staff groups, a paper had been drawn up proposing changes in the structure of the present General Secretariat. Though these had initially been suggested for the post-Harare period, some changes could be implemented sooner if authority were given by the governing bodies.

As this proposal had wide implications, it was being submitted to both the Finance and the Staffing and Nominations Sub-committees. It was felt that reflections on the future structure of the General Secretariat should be coordinated with the structural implications of the CUV process.

A number of questions were asked for clarification. Regarding a possible time-line, Dr Raiser said that it would be desirable if Central Committee in 1997 could approve the general framework for the operational structure of the Council following the Assembly; this would help the process of reporting and the programme hearings at the assembly which are currently planned to follow the present Unit and General Secretariat structure.

Fr Kishkovsky hoped that there would not be too much time pressure. He asked whether, should further financial difficulties arise, any flexibility was foreseen to enable the Executive to take action in February 1997 if this were to prove necessary? Dr Raiser affirmed that the Executive was in any case authorised to take any urgent action that could not wait till the next meeting of Central Committee, so no special action was required for this.

Staff were aware that their reflections were far from complete and much uncertainty

remained, said Dr Raiser, but they did not wish to carry the process further without having some backing from the governing bodies. That was why no fully-worked out proposals were yet to hand. There was a belief that the general direction was correct, but advice was being sought in particular with regard to Communications and Relationships. If the Executive accepted the general directions proposed, more work could be done and some conclusions brought to the Executive in February.

The Sub-committee recommended and the Executive Committee **agreed**:

*to receive the report on "Future Management Structures", and to approve the general direction suggested for the reorganisation of the General Secretariat contained in it;*

*to recommend to the Central Committee that a vacancy be declared for an Executive Director for Finance and Administration, to be filled if possible by 1 July 1997, and to seek the authority of Central Committee to make this appointment;*

*noting the further reduction in financial resources available for the Council and the need to change the Council's working style and management structures in the light of the Common Understanding and Vision process, to ask the General Secretary to pursue the proposals for the reorganisation of the General Secretariat, where necessary to implement them and to report back to the Executive Committee;*

*to ask that efforts to restructure the work of the General Secretariat be coordinated with the process of reviewing the working of the programme Units and that the long-term prospects for integrating the present four Units into a single administrative structure be explored.*

## K. A Financial Plan

The Central Committee in 1995 had asked the Finance Committee to prepare "a three year strategic financial plan for the whole period up to the next Assembly, taking into account programmes, working practices, personnel and financial resources". Mr Davies indicated that, after addressing the urgent tasks of reducing the anticipated deficit in 1996 and preparing a balanced budget for 1997, the staff had turned their attention to longer term objectives. A paper entitled "A Financial Plan" had been prepared, containing longer term suggestions for the improvement of the Council's financial management and operations. This paper had been noted by the Finance Sub-committee, but it was clearly a major project which required further detailed work.

It was therefore proposed, and the Executive Committee **agreed**:

*to note that proposals had been submitted to the Finance Sub-Committee for a long-term financial plan for the Council and to set up a small Financial Strategy Working Group to continue with the formulation and implementation of the financial strategy in close collaboration with the CUV process;*

*that the working group consist of the Moderator of the Finance Committee, Ms Rantakari (Moderator), and three others from the Finance Committee - Prof. Aagaard, Mr Briggs and Dr Granberg-Michaelson - together with appropriate staff.*

**L. Audit Committee**

Mr John Briggs reported to the Sub-committee on the work of the Audit Committee.

The Sub-committee recommended and the Executive Committtee **agreed**:

*that Klynfeld Peat Marwick Goerdeler, SA, (KPMG), be reappointed auditors for the 1996 accounts of the World Council of Churches.*

**M. Renewal of ENI grant**

A request had been received from the ENI Advisory Board for a renewal of the WCC's contribution for a further period of three years from 1997.

In response to a question, Dr Kässmann (WCC representative on the ENI Board) said that the other three bodies supporting ENI (CEC, LWF and WARC) did not contribute as much as had been hoped, but there was some expectation that other bodies might join in the long-term aim for an independent news service. ENI was well received, but without some security it could not continue for a further three years. Dr Raiser pointed out that the continuation of ENI was one of the conditions behind the decision to terminate *One World*, and he urged members to encourage people to subscribe.

It was recommended, and the Executive Committee **agreed**:

*that the request of the ENI Advisory Board for a renewal of the Council's funding commitment, at least at the same level (CHF 650,000 per annum) in real terms for a further period of three years from 1997, be forwarded to the Central Committee for approval.*

## 8. REPORT OF STAFFING AND NOMINATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE

Dr Nababan presented the report in a closed session on 11 September 1996.

### A. Staffing

*The Executive Committee recommended that the Central Committee authorise the General Secretary to proceed with the following appointments and contract extensions, the legal obligations of the World Council of Churches to be binding only as from the actual signing by both parties of the corresponding contracts or contract extensions.*

1. Appointments

*Unit III*

- **Rev. Freddy Knutsen** (Norway, Church of Norway) as Executive Secretary for Youth for four years from an agreed date

2. Contract Extensions

All the contract extensions listed below are for **one year**:

*Unit I*

- **Ms Evelyn Appiah** (Ghana, Methodist Church) Executive Secretary, Lay Participation towards Inclusive Community, from 1 February 1998 (will complete 28 years 6 months' service)
- **Rev. Dr Dagmar Heller** (FRG, EKD [United]) Executive Secretary, from 1 October 1997 (will complete 5 years 6 months' service)

*Unit II*

- **Dr Rexford Asante** (Ghana, Presbyterian Church of Ghana) Executive Secretary, from 1 January 1998 (will complete 5 years' service)
- **Dr Daleep Mukarji** (India, Church of North India) Executive Secretary for Urban Rural Mission, from 1 April 1998 (will complete 5 years' service)

*Unit IV*

- **Ms Carol Abel** (UK, Church of Ireland [Anglican]) Coordinator, Information Management Systems Development, from 1 January 1998 (will complete 5 years' service)

*Communication Department - Ecumenical News International*

- **Mr Stephen Brown** (UK, United Reformed Church in the United Kingdom) Editor, Ecumenical Press (News) Service, from 1 March 1998 (will complete 5 years' service)

- **Mr Edmund Doogue** (Ireland, Church of England (Anglican)) Editor, Ecumenical Press (News) Service, from 1 January 1998 (will complete 5 years' service)

*Office of Management and Finance - OICD*

- **Mr Peter Tallon** (UK, Roman Catholic Church) Proposals and Reports Coordinator, from 1 November 1997 (will complete 5 years' service)

*Computer Information Services - CIS*

- **Mr David Pozzi-Johnson** (USA, Evangelical Covenant Church in America) Director, from 1 October 1997 (will complete 8 years' service)

3. Ratification

The Executive Committee **requested** the Central Committee to approve the following contract extensions for one year, as agreed by the Officers in May 1996:

*Unit II*

- **Rev. Ana Langerak** (USA, Lutheran Church in Costa Rica) Director, from 1 July 1997 (will complete 5 years' service)

*Unit III*

- **Rev. Samuel Kobia** (Kenya, Methodist Church in Kenya) Executive Director, from 1 September 1997 (will complete 5 years' service)

*Unit IV*

- **Rev. Myra Blyth** (UK, Baptist Union of Great Britain) Executive Director, from 1 June 1997 (will complete 10 years 3 months' service)

4. Information

a) It was reported that the Officers made the following appointments by postal vote:

*Unit IV*

- **Mr Nils Carstensen** (Denmark, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark) as Executive Secretary, Emergencies Information Coordination and Media (ACT Team), for two years from 1 October 1996
- **Ms Miriam Lutz**, (USA, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) as Executive Secretary for Emergency and Rehabilitation (ACT Team Leader), for three years from 1 January 1996.

b) It was reported that the Officers made the following appointments at their meeting in Geneva in May 1996:

*Unit IV*

- **Mr Alexander Belopopsky** (UK, Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople [Eastern]), at present Consultant for Europe, as Executive Secretary for Europe for one year from 1 February 1997

*General Secretariat - Office for Income Coordination and Development*

- **Ms Anu Talvivaara** (Finland, Orthodox Church of Finland [Eastern]), at present Executive Secretary for Youth, Unit III, as Deputy Director from 22 July 1996 until 31 December 1998

Note: The list of contract extensions approved by the Officers at their meeting in May 1996 appears in the Minutes of Central Committee of September 1996

5. Vacancy

*General Secretariat*

- Executive Director for Finance and Administration

*The Executive Committee authorised the Officers to fill urgent vacancies that must be filled prior to the next meeting of the Executive Committee.*

## B. Applications for Membership

Mr Huibert van Beek introduced a document referring to two applications for membership: from the Methodist Church in Togo, and the Presbyterian Community of Kinshasa, Zaire. A second paper proposing guidelines for dealing with pending applications until the Assembly was also brought for consideration; both were referred to the Staffing and Nominations Sub-committee.

At a later session, on recommendation of the Sub-committee, the Executive Committee **agreed** to recommend to the Central Committee that the following churches be accepted as full members of the World Council of Churches:

- **Methodist Church in Togo (Eglise méthodiste au Togo)**

- **Presbyterian Community of Kinshasa (Communauté presbytérienne de Kinshasa)**

Suggested policy guidelines for handling pending applications for membership in the period until the Eighth Assembly were **approved** as follows, and forwarded to Central Committee for information:

- To proceed only with a limited number of applications in the remaining period up to the Assembly. These would be selected from the full list by the Sub-committee on Staffing and Nominations at the Executive Committee meeting in September 1996.

- In view of the current reflection on Common Understanding and Vision and on the Meaning of Membership, to suspend processing of all other applications until after the Assembly, and to inform the churches concerned accordingly.

- If an application is received after 1996, and if for good reasons it should be considered, the Sub-committee has the possibility to submit the case to the Executive Committee.

It was felt appropriate that several churches from Africa be received into membership at the Harare assembly.

## C. Membership Matters

Six new members of Central Committee were proposed to replace members who had retired or who had not attended several meetings. These were referred to the Staffing and Nominations Sub-committee for consideration.

The action taken by the Officers in May to appoint additional members of the Faith and Order Plenary Commission had been necessary in view of the meeting of the Commission scheduled for August 1996 in Moshi, Tanzania.

### a) Central Committee:

At a later session, on recommendation of the Sub-committee, the Executive Committee recommended that the Central Committee appoint the following new members:

- Dr Mihály **Almási**, Baptist Union of Hungary, replacing Rev. Dr Janos Viczian, who has resigned;

- Fr Vsevolod **Chaplin**, Russian Orthodox Church, replacing Prof. Alexi Buevsky, who has resigned;
- Ms Ülle **Keel**, Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church, replacing Rev. Aida Prédele, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia;
- Ms Kathy **Magnus**, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, replacin Sra. Denise Vazquez;
- Rev. Caroline **Pattiasina-Toreh**, Protestant Church of the Moluccas (GPM), Indonesia, replacing Dr Hesina Tetelepta, who has resigned;
- Pasteur Daniel **Vanescote**, United Protestant Church of Belgium, replacing Pasteur M. J. Beukenhorst, who has retired.

On recommendation of the Sub-committee, the Executive Committee endorsed the following actions taken by the Officers in May 1996, as follows:

**b) Faith and Order Plenary Commission:**

In accordance with the procedures for the appointment of members of the Plenary Commission, the following new members had been appointed so that they could take part in the Commission meeting in August 1996:

- Rev. Dr Daniel J. **Antwi**, Presbyterian Church in Ghana
- Rev. Canon Dr Sebastian **Bakare**, Church of the Province of Central Africa (Anglican), Zimbabwe
- Rev. Manuel Pedro **Cardoso**, Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Portugal
- Rev. I-to **Loh**, Presbyterian Church in Taiwan.
- Rev. Rogelio **Prieto**, Spanish Reformed Episcopal Church
- Rt Rev. Dr Rhee **Timbang**, Philippines Independent Church
- Rev. Edmond **Razafimahefa**, Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar.

**c) Faith and Order Board**

Rev. Dr Peter **Donald** had been appointed in place of Rev. Prof. Duncan Forrester who had resigned.

## D. Substitutes for Central Committee members

The Sub-committee studied a number of requests for substitutes for members of Central Committee unable to attend the forthcoming meeting. These were approved

and forwarded to Central Committee for action (see Minutes of Central Committee, September 1996, p.2).

### E. Membership of Public Issues Committee

On recommendation of the Sub-committee, the Executive **approved** a list of proposed names for submission to Central Committee for appointment.

* * *

*Note: The Executive Committee continued in closed session to consider its recommendation to the Central Committee with regard to the re-election of the General Secretary.*

* * *

## 9. PROPOSED SCHEDULE FOR CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

The General Secretary presented the proposed draft agenda and timetable for the forthcoming meeting of Central Committee, drawing attention in particular to the special Hearing on the Common Understanding and Vision process, and a Hearing on financial matters.

It was **agreed** to recommend the agenda to Central Committee for approval.

## 10. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1997 | Executive Committee | Cyprus | 12-15 February (arr.11, dep.16) |
| | Executive Committee | Geneva | 9-10 September (arr.9) |
| | Central Committee | Geneva | 11-19 September (arr.10, dep.20) |
| 1998 | Executive Committee | Geneva | 17-20 February (arr.15, dep.21) |

## 11. CLOSING ACTIONS

The General Secretary reported that former staff colleague Dr Eugene Stockwell, who was suffering from cancer, had had a relapse. Members were requested to remember him in their prayers. (He died on 8 October)

The Moderator expressed warm thanks to members for their active participation in the meeting. He also thanked the General Secretary and supporting staff for their help in ensuring the smooth running of this important session.

His Holiness Aram paid tribute to Patriarch Parthenios of blessed memory, one of the Council's Presidents, who died on 23 July. As a young priest His Holiness had met Patriarch Parthenios when he was a member of Central Committee. They had prayed and struggled together both in the WCC and the MECC.

Although Patriarch Parthenios never claimed to be a great theologian, he could make a solid theological intervention at the decisive point in a meeting. He was a man of dialogue, and made particular efforts to enhance dialogue among the Orthodox churches, between the Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Church and Protestant churches, within the fellowship of the WCC and outside it. He was a humble man, a devoted Christian and a committed ecumenist. He participated regularly in ecumenical gatherings in different parts of the world, and believed in the decisive importance of ecumenism for the life of our churches. He was an Orthodox Patriarch, but not in the narrow sense - he believed in Orthodoxy in creative interaction with other traditions of Christendom.

Patriarch Parthenios would always be remembered; he would be missed in the ecumenical movement as a whole and in the World Council of Churches in particular. May God bless his memory.

On behalf of the Executive Committee, His Holiness Aram offered condolences to the Ecumenical Patriarch and the Churches of the Orthodox world.

The Moderator closed this meeting of the Executive Committee with a prayer taken from the liturgy of the Armenian Church. The Committee then adjourned.

**APPENDIX I**

## ATTENDANCE

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Presidents: | Prof. Dr Anna-Marie Aagaard | |
| | Bishop Vinton R. Anderson | |
| | Bishop Leslie Boseto | |
| | Ms Priyanka Mendis | |
| | Rev. Eunice Santana | |
| | His Holiness Pope Shenouda | |
| | Dr Aaron Tolen | |
| Officers: | His Holiness Aram I | (Moderator) |
| | Ephorus Dr Soritua Nababan | (Vice-Moderator) |
| | Pastora Nélida Ritchie | (Vice-Moderator) |
| | Rev. Dr Konrad Raiser | (General Secretary) |
| Members: | Dr Marion Best | |
| | Mr John Briggs | |
| | Ms Virginia Gcabashe | |
| | Rt Rev. Drexel Gomez | |
| | Rev. Dr Margot Käßmann | |
| | Very Rev. Leonid Kishkovsky | |
| | Ms Maryssa Mapanao-Camaddo | |
| | Ms Beatrice Odonkor | |
| | Rt Rev. Dr J. Henry Okullu | |
| | Ms Birgitta Rantakari | |
| | Bishop Melvin G. Talbert | |
| | Very Rev. Dr Georges Tsetsis | |
| | Rt Rev. Dr Zacharias Mar Theophilos | |
| Apologies: | Metropolitan Daniel of Moldavia and Bukovina | |
| | Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk | |
| | Rev. Valamotu Palu | |
| Substitutes: | Archimandrite Nestor Jiliaev | |
| | Ms Tungane Williams | |

| | |
|---|---|
| Staff: | Rev. Dr S. Wesley Ariarajah |
| | Ms Jeanne Becher |
| | Rev. Myra Blyth |
| | Rev. Michael Davies |
| | Rev. Dwain Epps |
| | Rev. Dr Thomas FitzGerald |
| | Ms Aruna Gnanadason |
| | Mr John Irwin |
| | Mr Samuel Isaac |
| | Rev. Samuel Kobia |
| | Mr Jan Kok |
| | Rev. Ana Langerak |
| | Mr George Lemopoulos |
| | Ms Mary Ann Lundy |
| | Mr Günter Rath |
| | Fr Dr Ioan Sauca |
| | Rev. Carlos Sintado |
| | Ms Jean Stromberg |
| | Mr Huibert van Beek |
| Minute-writer: | Ms Rosemary Green |
| Administration: | Ms Ursula Zierl |

**APPENDIX II**

## MEMBERSHIP OF SUB-COMMITTEES

### Sub-committee on Staffing and Nominations

| | |
|---|---|
| Ephorus Dr Soritua Nababan | Moderator |
| Dr Marion Best | |
| Mr John Briggs | |
| Ms Virginia Gcabashe | |
| Bishop Drexel Gomez | |
| Metr. Kirill of Smolensk | (absent) |
| Rev. Valamotu Palu | (absent) |

### Sub-committee on Finance

| | |
|---|---|
| Ms Birgitta Rantakari | Moderator |
| Prof. Anne-Marie Aagaard | |
| Bishop Vinton Anderson | |
| Very Rev. Leonid Kishkovsky | |
| Ms Maryssa Mapanao-Camaddo | |
| Bishop Henry Okullu | |
| Rev. Eunice Santana | |
| Bishop Melvin Talbert | |

### Sub-committee on Programme

| | |
|---|---|
| Rev. Nélida Ritchie | Moderator |
| Bishop Leslie Boseto | |
| Metr. Daniel of Moldavia | (absent) |
| Dr Margot Käßmann | |
| Ms Priyanka Mendis | |
| Ms Beatrice Odonkor | |
| H.H. Pope Shenouda | |
| Dr Aaron Tolen | |
| Dr Georges Tsetsis | |
| Bishop Zacharias Mar Theophilos | |

**APPENDIX III**

## The WCC and Celebrations to Mark the Year 2000

### Background

What role should the WCC play in the celebrations to mark the year 2000? This question has been raised not only during recent meetings of the governing bodies but is persistently asked by a considerable number of member churches, ecumenical partners, interested groups or individuals and particularly the mass-media.

The WCC has already begun to identify, spell out and assume the role which might be expected of it. Among these steps, specific attention should be given to the following:

- *A Memorandum* for consideration by the member churches (Executive Committee meeting in Bucharest; September, 1994);
- discussions within the framework of the Joint Working Group and recommendations from the plenary meeting in Chambésy (May, 1996);
- consultation with member churches during visits of heads of churches to Geneva or visits of the General Secretary to churches;
- the June 1996 consultation of representatives of Christian World Communions, ecumenical organizations and some member churches who have indicated their interest in marking the year 2000 in a special way;
- a team visit to churches in Jerusalem following the June consultation, to explore whether they wish to invite other Christian churches to celebrate the millennium and whether the WCC, in cooperation with the MECC, can support the local churches in this task.

In the light of these initiatives, the WCCs' specific role can be described as follows:

(a) to promote dialogue among the churches about their plans for the year 2000 and to provide a platform of exchange between churches interested in celebrations to mark the occasion;

(b) to encourage churches in each place to manifest before or during the celebrations their fellowship; and

(c) to support local churches in Jerusalem faced with the challenge of hosting an ecumenical celebration in the Holy Land.

## An assessment of the current situation

A first assessment of plans to celebrate the year 2000 indicates that there are a number of aspirations and convictions shared by churches and ecumenical organizations: an emphasis on the centrality of the local/national level; an affirmation of the importance of prayer; a series of proposals to incorporate in celebrations the use of biblical texts or credal affirmations; the value of symbolic actions, etc. These could constitute the core of a meaningful ecumenical celebration. The WCC Memorandum had already suggested to the churches most of these elements.

It would, therefore, be appropriate for the WCC to make now an additional effort to enhance these common convictions, to suggest them to a greater circle of churches and ecumenical partners, and to underline their significance for a truly ecumenical celebration.

Yet, the WCC could do something more. It could be more instrumental in raising pertinent questions related to the churches' plans and aspirations. A dialectic attitude of both affirming the churches' common convictions and, at the same time, raising decisive questions about their implications, could lead us to the following reflections:

(a) *Nature of the celebrations*. The year 2000 is primarily of significance for Christians worldwide. Other religions follow their own calendars. Any Christian celebration should take into account the interreligious and intercultural dimension of the millennium and avoid triumphalist claims. Whatever the nature, extent and character of the celebrations being prepared might be, they should not accentuate the divisions that churches have experienced in the second millennium. *How can churches, celebrating the dawn of the new millennium, illustrate and affirm their fellowship, offering thus an act of meaningful witness and a sign of hope?*

(b) *Significance of prayer*. Most of the plans focus on the spiritual-liturgical preparation and foresee liturgical events. The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is commonly accepted as an already existing and appropriate tool to facilitate an ecumenical celebration of the millennium at the local level. *How to hold together a great number of suggestions and plans in order not only to affirm the importance of common prayer but also to make common prayer an underlying element of all the celebrations?*

(c) *The importance of "texts"*. The churches' willingness to concentrate together on a number of biblical passages facilitating our understanding of the jubilee, to explore

together the translation and liturgical use of the Lord's Prayer, to confess together the faith of the Nicean-Constantinople Creed, manifest the ecumenical potential of a great number of fundamental texts. *How can churches go beyond the usual ecumenical debate about these texts and exploit this renewed opportunity to deepen and to express their communion?*

(d) *The centrality of the local/national level.* There is no doubt that celebrations to mark the new millennium would be meaningless unless they focus on the local/national level. Yet the crucial issues are whether these celebrations have to be ecumenical; whether they should aim at strengthening and communicating the fellowship of churches which exists in each and every place. *How can the WCC enable and encourage churches in each place to celebrate ecumenically?*

(e) *Pastoral and theological preparation.* Together with the affirmation of the importance of the local/national level, there is an emphasis on the pastoral and theological preparation of the faithful in each and every place. Studies are planned everywhere for congregations, schools and various interest groups. *Will these studies be undertaken in a spirit of confessionalism or will they attempt to bring Christians together?*

(f) The *value of symbolic actions.* A number of symbols and symbolic actions are included in almost every project: light and water are some of the material elements which are being proposed. Their theological and liturgical influence can be precious. There are symbolic actions, however, which have an even deeper meaning and which could have a powerful impact on the churches' journey towards unity: a solemn common acceptance of baptismal communion; a common confession of a creed; lifting anathemas; a common commitment of the churches to enter the process of preparing a genuinely universal Christian council. *Are churches ready to undertake courageous steps in this direction, not for the sake of the theological dialogue in itself or for the sake of touching gestures which may captivate the attention of the mass-media, but for the sake of affirming their communion? Are there other symbolic actions which could express the communion of the churches and should be ecumenically explored?*

(g) *A multitude of events - A common event.* Obviously churches and Christian World Communions will celebrate the new millennium in many places and in various ways. A multitude of projects and events seems at this stage to be quite normal and legitimate. The idea, however, for a meeting of all Christians at the global level, enhanced by the Holy Father's open invitation, seems also to be an unavoidable component of the celebrations to mark the year 2000. For the time

being at least, two fundamental questions are raised around this issue: *(a) how to ensure the genuine ecumenical character of such a meeting, and (b) what would be the most appropriate venue for such an encounter?*

With regard to the latter question, priority seems to be given by almost all churches and ecumenical partners to Jerusalem as the central venue (but including Bethlehem and Nazareth).

## Celebration in Jerusalem?

A celebration in Jerusalem at the invitation of the local church could be an act of solidarity with Christians in this part of our world who are aware of their weakness and need for support. It could also be a Christian contribution to the peace process. Finally, it could offer the possibility of meeting with leaders of other religious communities. A genuine ecumenical celebration of the year 2000 in Jerusalem could become a powerful sign of commitment to Christian unity and offer a convincing message of hope.

Having this in mind and responding to the explicit demand during the June meeting that the WCC enter into dialogue with churches in Jerusalem in order to facilitate their reflection and decision, a small team visited Jerusalem and met with heads of churches and the "Jerusalem Inter-Christian Committee" in charge of the ecumenical celebration at the local level.

The immediate and positive outcome of this visit can be quickly summarized: the issue is now formally on the agenda of the heads of churches. Gratitude was expressed to the WCC for the way it has handled this concern.

While accepting such a delicate role, we should keep in mind the difficulties and challenges represented by the political, ecclesial and ecumenical situation in Jerusalem.

There are still many uncertainties with regard to the political situation: some plans for celebrations have clear political connotations (Bethlehem 2000 and Nazareth 2000), and very often a political role is attributed to the Vatican by those living in the region. The ecclesial situation is fragile, on the one hand, because of imminent changes in the leadership of the churches (new Anglican and Lutheran bishops), and, on the other, because the ecumenical spirit and mechanisms in Jerusalem, although promising, still lack maturity. Finally, what are the ecumenical implications of the

key questions being raised in Jerusalem: "who are to be invited?" and "can we pray together during an ecumenical celebration?", rather than "who invites?" or "can we host an ecumenical celebration?".

The WCC should, therefore, try to bring together the local churches in Jerusalem, assist them to analyze the situation, overcome some difficulties and confront others in an ecumenical manner. There are possibilities for the WCC to do so in cooperation with the MECC. However, we should probably be ready to assume this role discreetly and accept *a priori* that we may even have to discourage this celebration if we are convinced that ultimately the interests of the "living stones", Christians who live in the Holy Land, as well as the life and witness of our member churches in Jerusalem, are not well served.

**Some concrete tasks**

(a) The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity will occupy a central place in the celebrations. New guidelines should be given to Faith and Order and the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity, taking into consideration the time factor and that churches in the Middle East will be involved in the preparation for 1999 and 2000.

(b) Faith and Order should be encouraged to consider the value and feasibility of such symbolic actions as a common creed, baptismal communion, lifting of anathema, common celebration of Easter.

(c) Representatives of the WCC in the Joint Working Group should be encouraged to continue their threefold task of *dialogue, cooperation* and *challenge* with regard to the Roman Catholic celebration of the Jubilee Year 2000 and its ecumenical dimension.

(d) Local churches should be encouraged to play an important role in the celebrations. They should also be encouraged and enabled to produce their own material which could be shared with the wider ecumenical community.

(e) The readiness of ecumenical organizations (Christian World Communions, Regional Ecumenical Organizations, National Councils/Conferences of Churches, United Bible Societies) to accompany and facilitate the celebrations through a process of communication and sharing of biblical, theological, liturgical and other resources should be carefully assessed by the WCC. The Council should certainly

encourage such ecumenical cooperation and envisage ways of coordinating these efforts.

(f) The WCC could facilitate the sharing of information so that churches and ecumenical partners are informed of ongoing plans, given the importance churches accord to long and careful theological and pastoral preparation of the faithful. In this sense, the WCC should arrange in the coming year another encounter of ecumenical partners planning celebrations to mark the year 2000.

(g) The WCC should continue its involvement in plans for a celebration in Jerusalem. It should intensify its contacts with a wider circle of churches and ecumenical organizations interested in or directly concerned by the issue (churches of the region, MECC, Orthodox family, etc.). Careful attention must be given to how this question is handled in relation to the mass-media.